

To: Ferrell, Mark[Ferrell.Mark@epa.gov]
From: Mark Ferrell
Sent: Sat 1/18/2014 10:09:33 PM
Subject: Fwd: ROCKEFELLER: CHEMICAL SAFETY BOARD NOW BETTER ABLE TO INVESTIGATE MCHM SPILL

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Rockefeller, Press (Rockefeller)" <Press@rockefeller.senate.gov>
Date: January 18, 2014 at 4:20:31 PM EST
Subject: ROCKEFELLER: CHEMICAL SAFETY BOARD NOW BETTER ABLE TO INVESTIGATE MCHM SPILL



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beckner
January 18, 2014
West Virginia)

Contact: Andrew J.

304-347-5504 (in

202-224-6101 (in DC)

ROCKEFELLER: CHEMICAL SAFETY BOARD NOW BETTER ABLE TO INVESTIGATE MCHM SPILL

Senator's request for more funding for CSB included

in FY 2014 spending package

WASHINGTON, DC – Now that Congress has approved his request for a boost in the Chemical Safety Board's budget, Senator Jay Rockefeller today said the CSB is now better equipped to investigate the cause of last week's Elk River chemical spill—and make key recommendations to prevent another water crisis from happening.

“The Chemical Safety Board has been strained in recent years by slashed budgets, small staffs and the difficulty of responding to incidents across the country,” Rockefeller said. “That's why I pushed my colleagues to boost the CSB's budget and give the agency the resources it needs to do its job. That's more important now more than ever, as people all across West Virginia are demanding answers in the wake of the ongoing water crisis.”

Rockefeller on January 11 called for a Chemical Safety Board (CSB) investigation immediately following a January 9 spill of 7,500 gallons of crude methylcyclohexane methanol (MCHM) into the Elk River, tainting the water supply for 300,000 West Virginia American Water customers in the Kanawha Valley. But Rockefeller worried about the over-worked and under-staffed agency's ability to work quickly in discovering the spill's cause.

With that in mind, Rockefeller wrote a letter to colleagues working on a fiscal year 2014 government funding package seeking more than \$11 million for the CSB's operations. The Republican-controlled House of Representatives earlier this year sought just over \$8 million for the CSB, threatening the agency's ability to respond to the ongoing crisis in West Virginia.

This week, Congress passed a 2014 spending bill that included Rockefeller's request for more CSB funding.

“The CSB is so important to West Virginia, which has unfortunately had to rely on its assistance many times in recent years, so I'm enormously pleased that my

colleagues agreed to my funding request,” Rockefeller added.

Background:

Rockefeller responded quickly to the spill, and since last week has acted on a number of fronts:

- Immediately following the incident, Rockefeller requested a Chemical Safety Board (CSB) investigation into the root cause of the incident;
- The CSB responded less than 24 hours later, announcing they would send a team to Charleston. That team arrived on Monday, January 13;
- Rockefeller urged colleagues working on a 2014 spending package to boost funding for the CSB, which is over-worked and under-staffed. A more robust funding level for the CSB was included in the omnibus spending bill, which passed Thursday night and included Rockefeller’s request for additional CSB funding;
- Wrote a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requesting a comprehensive study into the long-term public health risks associated with crude 4-methylcyclohexane methanol, or MCHM;
- Co-sponsored a pair of bills with Hawaii Senator Brian Schatz to hold polluters responsible for spills;
- Co-sponsored a bill with Senators Joe Manchin and Barbara Boxer designed to stop spills before they happen;
- Wrote a letter to West Virginia American Water seeking answers to recent reports of continued high levels of MCHM in drinking water despite the company’s decision to rescind its “do not use” order. (Read the letter here.)

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